

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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MEMORANDUM

To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Government Affairs Chair Peter McMahon

Re: February & March, 2006 Meetings

Date: March 31, 2006

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Government Affairs Subcommittee met February 9, 2006 at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) and March 8, 2006 at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED). Present for the February meeting were subcommittee members McMahon and Ellis, as well as ENRP Co-Chair Weinstein. Present for the March meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Allen, Anello, Ellis, and Lewis.

Economic Development Forum:

The subcommittee remains committed to holding two local governments forums on the topic of the economic development process (one for each county). One of the main presenters, Jerry Murphy, is no longer employed at the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise (BNE). Therefore, staff has contacted BNE to determine Murphy's replacement. The presentation and information sheet will then be redistributed for revision and the forums will move forward.

Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS):

The contextual portion of the REDS has been done for some time, and the cluster work is nearing completion as well, although more work needs to be done on the logistics and advanced manufacturing clusters. The project is ready to be taken back to the small group, but organizing a meeting has been difficult.

The real issue at this point is determining the client for the REDS. Originally the ECIDA was funding the project, but they stopped and hired a consultant to do the cluster work for them. They then halted that effort, and provided \$20,000 to the UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth to resume the effort. Former director John Sheffer approved this, but current director Kathryn Foster is unsure as to what direction should be taken. Is it just to

finish the clusters? Finish the report? Implement it, but under whose advisement? Also, how does it tie in with the Framework for Regional Growth, which is also at the end of its funding?

Subcommittee member Allen summed up the discussion by noting that for 50 years, economic development was done by chance. Now there is a strategy, but who will take leadership of it and who will buy in to it? Subcommittee chair McMahon replied that just having the clusters done is advantageous, but that the REDS should be implemented – even if additional work still needs to be done.

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Government Affairs Subcommittee recommends that the ENRP take leadership on the Regional Economic Development Strategy by releasing the REDS with the clusters currently completed being integrated to the already completed contextual piece, and committing to completing one additional cluster per year for the next two years.

Electronic Permitting:

The subcommittee received an update on the discussion of this topic in the Economic Development Subcommittee and is referring the issue to them for further action. At such time when the project needs outreach to the counties' municipalities it should be referred back to Government Affairs.

Meeting with Mayor Brown:

In 2005 the subcommittee discussed the idea of fostering collaboration between the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls. A meeting will be held with City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown to introduce him to ENRP and its projects and discuss the potential for his participation (it should be noted that City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning Commissioner Timothy Wanamaker is an ENRP member). Those from ENRP who will participate will be Co-Chair Burmaster, members Anello, McMahon, and Wanamaker, and administrator Kniazuk.

ENRP Newsletter:

A continuing topic of discussion is awareness of ENRP in the community. Subcommittee member Weinstein suggested that a periodic newsletter could be sent to local, state, and federal officials, as well as to the media and other groups. The newsletter could also be used as a fundraising tool. **The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Government Affairs Subcommittee recommends that the ENRP produce a periodic newsletter.**

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included the governor's proposed funding for regional collaborations, using ENRP as a facilitator for intermunicipal collaborations, and meeting with the Western New York delegation to the New York State Legislature.